Make, Play, Everyday

Integrating Playful Art Experiences into the Lives of Young Children

Kate Gugliotta
PlayHouse
Children’s Museum
A Peoria Park District Facility
Contents

Forward 1
Introduction 3

The Importance of Play
Artistic Development in Young Children
Getting Started
Organization
How to Use This Book

Chapter 1  Living Room 18
Chapter 2  Home Office 22
Chapter 3  Kitchen 26
Chapter 4  Bathroom 31
Chapter 5  Bedroom 35
Chapter 6  Garage/Storage 39
Chapter 7  Neighborhood 43
Resources 49

✹
The mission of the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum is to help children become explorers and creators of the world. To be an explorer is to look closely at the world around you, noticing details and peering beyond the surface. Explorers are curious; they ask questions and look for answers. To be a creator is to shape your environment. Creators innovate; they invent new ways of putting together materials or ideas. To create is to use your imagination to make something new.

Artists do all of these things. They look closely, they ask questions, and they imagine new ways of combining materials or ideas to make new things.

Engaging children with art is a fantastic way to help them become explorers and creators of the world. When participating in PlayHouse art programs, children are encouraged to become artists, not just make crafts. Instead of simply copying something familiar, or focusing on generating a product to hang on the wall, children are challenged to play with the materials: to look and experiment, to invent and create. They are encouraged to build, glue, squish, shape, crumple, and fold.

In 2016, thanks to a PNC Grow up Great grant, the PlayHouse is bringing together active artists, experienced teachers, and students from the Bright Futures program to investigate how three- and four-year-olds explore and create with art materials. The goal is for children to broaden their understanding of art, and to engage in the meaningful choice-making that leads to innovation.
As part of this project, the PlayHouse produced this book, written by art educator Kate Gugliotta. It is our hope that this book will support families in engaging with art at home, using everyday materials.

As you use this book, please share your findings, and images of your children experimenting and the things they create, with the PlayHouse on Facebook or Twitter using @Peoriaplayhouse and #makeplayeveryday.

Thank you to Kate Gugliotta, author, Jean Hettel, editor, and Sue Koch, designer, for their contributions. This project is made possible by PNC.
Introduction
The Importance of Play

Young children learn through play. Dressing-up as a doctor, building a tall tower with blocks, or filling a bucket full of sand and dumping it out allows children to try on different roles and have new experiences. Play helps children uncover their world and discover who they are as human beings. They share their ideas and negotiate with others, try new things, and learn from both their successes and mistakes.

Art, for a young child, naturally goes hand in hand with play. What is more exciting than squishing clay for the first time, or discovering that mixing yellow and blue paint make green? “Is this magic?” one of my preschool students asked me recently while mixing red and blue paint with his hands. Purple paint extended all the way up to his elbows. I thought about it for a moment as I watched him squishing his hands in purple paint and giggling. Indeed, there is something magical about seeing young children make art. A child approaches art with an open mind, with no set limitations, full of possibilities and excitement to create something brand new and meaningful to him or her.

Why does it seem like the cardboard box is the greatest toy ever invented? It provides a child with endless possibilities of play: the box can be a cookie store, an airplane . . . the possibilities are endless.
Objects that you can find around the house, like magazines or newspaper, for example, combined with basic art supplies, can be a great way to introduce young children to the world of art. A cardboard box that you’ve just received in the mail, plastic water bottle caps, last week’s newspaper: these are all materials that can be used for hours of fun and exciting play for a young child, as well as the opportunity to create something new and exciting. Unlike coloring books or craft kits, these objects carry no pre-conceived expectations of what the final outcome should be. There is endless room for play and exploration, as the material changes moment to moment from one idea to another. Found object materials are also free or very low cost and can be used over and over again. Children will stay engaged and focused because their minds are active with solving problems and planning new possibilities.

It seems these days that there is less and less time for children to play. As our world gets more and more competitive, there is, more than ever, increased pressure for children to perform or get ahead. Children are also exposed to more hours of television, video games, and virtual devices than ever before. Studies suggest that sitting passively in front of a television does not allow a child’s brain to be creative or engaged in active learning. As teachers, parents, and educators, the best art/play experiences we can provide our children are exposure to a variety of materials and open-ended art experiences which are organized, yet flexible. Children need to be given space while they play/work, yet also nurtured along the way through dialogue and encouragement.

Art, creativity, and play doesn’t just happen in the art studio (whether your child’s studio is at school, at home, or at an after school class), but during everyday interactions: a walk

---

down the street, a ride on the bus, or a trip to the store. The environment we create and shape for a child helps them not only to have rich, artistic experiences throughout their childhood, but also helps to develop language, critical thinking skills, basic math and counting skills, and shape, line and color identification. Most importantly, rich artistic experiences allow children to feel empowered to make choices and share their ideas and thoughts. Art-making is inspired by everyday experiences, by the world we live in.

If you go into any museum or gallery today, you will see contemporary artists working with everyday materials that directly come from their lives and transformed to reflect personal experiences. Being an artist does not mean you need to know how to paint or sculpt a certain way. Being an artist means that you transform materials in a way that
reflects your ideas and your experiences. Children’s first art experiences are best taught and learned in this way, as well.

This book might seem a bit different from most art project books. There are no desired or specific outcomes for each project. The materials alone provide the inspiration. Each activity presents materials, tools, conversation starters, and ideas to connect the activity to specific artistic elements. But most importantly, we want children to be allowed to just play with materials. Dipping paper in glue, ripping tape, and using a brush on paper are experiences where children learn they can make or do something that wasn’t there before. As one wise teacher, Judith Burton, told me, “materials serve as lenses: ways in which we can imagine, dream, and experience things in our world.”
Artistic Development in Young Children

Drawing

Drawing starts even earlier than holding a first crayon or marker. A good example of this is dinnertime. Splat! A chunk of applesauce misses the baby’s mouth and falls to the floor. Second try — the applesauce goes in the mouth, is immediately spit out, and somehow lands in the child’s hair. By the time dinner is over, most of the applesauce is either on the tray of the high chair or on the floor. The baby squeals with excitement, moves her arms and fingers around, and coats her hands and arms in the gooey mess. Time for a bath? Yes indeed. However, something more important has taken place. The baby has realized
that by moving her hand she can move the applesauce around on the tray, back and forth, making lines and mounds. By engaging both her sense of touch and the physical action of her arms she learns that her hands can make something that wasn’t there before.²

Many children will begin with drawing dots, lines, and circles. Children sometimes make sounds or sing while they work. If the child has little or no language, you can talk to them about what you see in terms of lines, colors, and shapes. Don’t assume you see a dinosaur or a picture of mommy! To a child who is making scribble lines, you can say, “I see you’re making lots of fast lines . . . look! This one went so fast it flew off the paper! Your crayon is going in so many different directions. Look! The blue and red overlap here.”

²Dr. Judith Burton, Artistic Development of Children Lecture, Teachers College, Columbia University, 9/13/04
Painting

Painting can be a challenge. It can be messy and involves a lot of set-up and clean-up. Finding an ideal spot to paint at home can be difficult. If you don’t have a designated art studio space, the kitchen may be the best place to paint since there usually isn’t carpet, or fabric-covered couches or chairs to stain. Cover the workspace with newspaper, have your child wear a smock (which can be as simple as an old t-shirt), and you’re ready to go! You may also want to wear a smock yourself, too. Children should never be scolded for getting paint on their hands or even wanting to paint their hands. Many children love the tactile, squishy qualities of paint. Some children may not. It is best to let them explore at their own pace and see what they are ready for. Painting can also be fun at the park or an outdoor space. Just make sure to take enough containers to hold the paint and water, paper or a blanket to cover your workspace, plus lots of paper towels or rags for clean-up.

Paint: There are quite a few varieties of paint for children. Finger painting may be the first experience a child has using paint. Finger paints are usually very easy to clean and wash off little hands and arms. When children are able to grasp a brush in their hand, have them try tempera paint or watercolor paint. Watercolor paints come in both solid cake form and liquid. Paint and water can be poured into yogurt cups or egg cartons. Art supply stores also sell no-spill cups with special lids.

Paintbrushes: These come in all shapes and sizes and prices: flat, round, long, short, chubby, wide. Children can experiment with all sizes of brushes but it may be easiest for the very young to first try chubby brushes with a special grip on the bottom.

Paper: Paper also comes in all shapes, sizes, and colors. The thicker the paper is, the more paint it will hold. Thin papers may not be ideal for finger painting, as they will rip or tear apart as the child layers paint. Watercolors work best on a textured paper that can absorb the paint.
Collage
Collage introduces children to different shapes, colors, and textures, as well as the idea of composition. Papers of all shapes and sizes can be used, along with glue or tape. Newspapers, old construction paper, and magazine pages are a great way to begin. Children can rip papers in various sizes or use scissors when they’re ready to make shapes. Young children can have a cup of glue set up for them to dip the papers in and then stick on the paper. Adults can ask the children about the choices they made in terms of composition, such as “Where will you place your paper? Will it go at the top of the paper or at the bottom? I see you put two papers very close together . . . I wonder if they are friends?”

Layering is exciting when it comes to collage. Crayons, markers, paints . . . the possibilities are endless. Drawing materials may work best before glue (unless you want the drawing materials to be glued onto the paper, and become part of the collage)! Many of the materials and activities in the book involve collage. As you will see, there is really no limit to what can be incorporated into a collage.
Sculpture

Big, tall, little, small, hard, squishy, soft...sculpture is an introduction to shape, size, texture, and form. One of the first sculptural experiences for a young child is play-dough. Play-dough is an excellent material because it can be manipulated in many different ways with small hands and change from one moment to the next. If your child is unhappy with what they made, they can squish it back together and start again. Air-dry clays like Crayola Model Magic also provide wonderful first experiences for children to manipulate. Instead of putting out pre-made cookie cutters or toys, ask a child “How can we change the shape of the clay? Can we flatten it like a pancake? Maybe we can roll it like a snake? Or poke a hole in it? How does the clay feel in your fingers? Is it hot or cold?” Objects like beads, wire, and straws are exciting to press into clay, as they provide new forms and depths to an activity. Other sculptural materials like wood, wire, and found objects are introduced in more depth throughout the book.
**Printmaking**

Most children feel great satisfaction at the sight of their handprint on a piece of paper: “It’s my hand!” Another great discovery is that it can be repeated over and over again in a variety of colors and on many pieces of paper. Making prints is a great time to learn about counting and shape recognition.

Printmaking can be done with many objects around the house: for example, sponges, wine corks, or tag board with tempera paint or ink. Little printmakers are best started with paint. Ink is very sticky and is also less likely to come out of clothes. However, it does provide a different effect than paint, which may get watery and smudge. If you’re ready to try ink, you’ll need a brayer (an ink roller) and plate or cookie sheet to roll out the ink. The printmaking process is explained in greater depth throughout the book.

**Photography**

Taking a picture with a camera is exciting for a small child. A camera provides a small child with a new way of seeing the world and gives them the opportunity to make a choice of what to capture. There are companies that make child-friendly digital cameras with rubber coating. Most phones also have cameras. With a little modeling (“I look through the window here to see and press the silver button at the top”), pre-schoolers can use cameras very easily. Go for a walk together and look for shapes, colors, animals, etc. Downloading the photos can be fun experience together and also an exciting way to see the world through your child’s eyes.

**Sketchbook**

A sketchbook is your child’s personal art diary. They can draw, paint, or make collage in it, and it can provide hours of entertainment during a trip to the park, waiting at the doctor’s office, or a long car-ride. Drawing materials can be carried in a small Tupperware container or a ziplock bag.
There are a few art materials which you may always want to have on hand.

Crayons
Markers
Paper (variety of colors, sizes, and textures)
Oil pastels
Scissors
Tape
Glue (liquid or a glue stick)
Paintbrushes
Tempera paint
Watercolor paint (liquid or cake form)

You can find these materials at Target, Walmart, an art supply store like Dick Blick, or even a drug store like Rite Aid or CVS.

You may also want to look for items around the house for your child’s studio:

Egg cartons (to use as paint trays)
Yogurt containers (for holding water to clean brushes or as a container for crayons)
Spaghetti sauce jars (for holding markers and pencils)
Newspapers and magazines (for collage and to cover work areas)
Tupperware or take-out containers (to store supplies)
Large roll of paper

Reusing these materials teaches children an important lesson about recycling and finding a new purpose for materials that would otherwise be thrown away.
So where is all of this stuff going to go without creating a huge mess or tons of clutter? It is important to carve out a space in your home or classroom for making and storing art.

In a small apartment it can be difficult to find an empty space. You may want to create space in a corner or on a shelf for your child’s art area. One family I worked with turned a closet into a work area for their son by putting a stool and shelf inside.

You can help your child store their art supplies and collections in an art box, which can be as simple as a shoebox or small container that can be easily accessible when it’s time to make art. The art box itself can be the beginning of this exciting journey together! Ask your child how they’d like to decorate the art box—paint, markers, stickers, etc. The art box can then be used as a special place to hold papers and small objects that your child might want to use in a future art project. Art materials can also be kept in here, as well.
You may also want to keep a separate, larger box or basket for art projects to live in. Taking photographs of 2D work is also a good idea, especially if you need to consolidate artworks after a while. You can archive the work by month or year and even make a photo album online together with your child.

Prepare your space beforehand. It may take a little more work in the beginning, but there will be less clean up in the end. An organized workstation also allows for fewer spills or messes to occur. Cover tables or floors with newspaper, fill water containers, and display materials in a neat and organized way, such as in small cups or containers, for your child to see. Have your child wear a smock, apron, or old t-shirt to keep their clothes clean and roll up those sleeves! (You may want to do the same.)

Clean up tools and supplies right away. Put painted brushes in a cup of soapy water and let them soak for a while before washing out. Let glue-covered brushes soak a bit longer.
How to Use This Book

The book is divided into seven chapters, each of which represent the room in your home where you’re most likely to find each material, as well as outdoor activities and adventures. Each “room” chapter is divided up into activities by materials and techniques.

As you talk to your child about what they are making, start by saying “Tell me about your art work,” which puts the conversation in the child’s hands. By saying, “What is that?” you are insinuating that you don’t recognize or understand what your child is doing. We can guide young children, who may not have the vocabulary yet, along the way in conversation by verifying what we see. “I see you’re painting with red.” Or “I see some wiggly lines up in the corner. They are touching that little orange square.” Throughout the book there will be ideas and tips to start a dialogue.

So let’s get started!
Roll, Crumple, Twist: Newspaper

Newspaper is a material that is very easy for a young child to manipulate. It can easily be ripped, folded, or crumpled. Young children will learn that paper can evolve into different forms and turned from a flat, 2D object into a 3D sculpture.

Materials:
- Newspaper
- Scissors (adult)
- Glue or tape
- Cardboard or base to attach paper

Prepare newspaper pages by ripping or cutting into smaller, more manageable pieces depending on the age of the child. Young children will work best with shapes and sizes that they are able to grasp in their hands.

Start with a stretch. Ask your child: “How are ways we can change and move our bodies?” Find a place in your living room with room to move around. Ask your child to stand up nice and straight. Grow taller by standing on your toes and reaching arms up into the air. Curve your body to the right, curve to the other side. Twist your body from side to side. Bend forward and backwards. Curl your body into a ball on the floor.
Bring out newspaper.

Ask your child: “How can we change the paper? How can we make the paper stand up just like we did with our own bodies?”

Play! Practice bending, folding, twisting, and crumpling. Rip the paper! “Now we have two pieces. Did you make a new shape?”

Ask your child: “How else can we change the paper?” Poke a hole through it or roll and make a telescope. . . “What do you see?” Pretend you are explorers and talk about what you find through your telescope.

Demonstrate how paper can be attached with either glue or tape. Children can dip paper into a cup of glue or attach ends with tape.

Make! Invite children to take the different papers and glue them down on their base, such as a piece of cardboard. Ask: “How will you attach all of your new forms together?”
I Like to Move It!

Large-Scale Movement Drawing

We all love to listen and dance to music together. In this activity, art and dance are connected through music and movement by creating a large-scale painting based on a freeze-dance activity.

Materials:

• Stereo or other music source
• Roll of paper or large paper
  (big enough to trace a child’s body)
• Crayons or oil pastels
• Paintbrushes
• Paint
• Water
• Paper towels

Prepare by choosing 4–5 types of music to listen to: from jazz to classical to rock to rhythm and blues—or whatever you like best!

(Sample play list: Laurel Aitken, “Boogie in My Bones”; White Stripes, “We’re Going to Be Friends”; Outcast “Hey Ya”; Miles Davis, “So What”; Feist, “1,2,3,4”; Bob Marley, “Three Little Birds”; Pachelbel, “Canon in D”.)
Play! Freeze dance with your child. The more people who play along, the merrier! Explain the rules before you start: “We will be listening to a few different types of music. When the music stops, you will freeze your body like a statue.” Turn on the first type of music and start dancing. After 20 seconds, freeze. Try again. Switch the music and notice how the movement/dance changes.

Ask your child, “Do different kinds of music make us feel/dance differently? How did you move your body to the jazz music? Did you go fast or slow? Did you move your arms and legs fast when you heard rock? Which music did you like the best? Which pose was your favorite?”

Make! Roll out a large piece of paper. You will be tracing an outline of your child’s body. Invite the child to lie down on the piece of paper and make a pose. (If they are hesitant at first, model it yourself by lying down or ask them to trace a stuffed animal or doll.) Will their hands go in the air or to the side? Will their legs be bent or straight? As you are tracing with a crayon around your child’s body, it might be helpful to say, “Now I’m tracing your hands, now the crayon is going around your feet” so they feel like they can be a part of the experience.

Hand out the drawing materials. You may want to start first with crayons or oil pastels and then switch to paint. Have child color in the outline of his or her body with the materials. You can say, “Crayons and paintbrushes also like to dance, just like us! Brushes can go fast or slow or round and round . . . how is your brush moving?”
We Zig and Zag: Using Tape

Tape is a very accessible and exciting material for young children when it is cut into small pieces. Masking and painters tape are sold in a variety of colors and shapes at hardware stores and art supply stores. Tape provides immediate satisfaction to young kids as it is connected to other pieces to make longer lines, is layered, and turned into new shapes and forms.

Materials:
• Tape (in a variety of colors, if possible)
• Paper or a surface to attach tape to.

Prepare tape by cutting or ripping into small pieces.
(Younger children will have trouble ripping or cutting on their own.)
Place cut tape on the edge of a table or surface. You could also use a small plastic box, turn it upside down, and place tape around all sides.

Experiment by putting tape on various papers and different colors.

Ask your child, “Where do you want to put your tape? At the top of the paper? At the bottom? In the middle? Where will your next piece of tape go? Will it be close or far away?”

Make a tape collage by adding new materials such as ripped paper.
Long pieces of tape may get stuck together and become a ball. This may be frustrating at first but clumps of tape are fun to add to give the artwork a 3D look.
Learn about measurement by experimenting with various sizes of tape: long, short, big, little, enormous! What happens when the pieces of tape are connected? How do they grow?

Play! Make a Tape Walk! Create a tape walk on the floor with your child. Take a long piece of tape and lay it across the floor. (Check to make sure that the tape doesn’t damage the floor.) You can create several lines with various colors of tape: zig zag, curved, dotted, etc.

Ask your child to pretend. Pretend you are on a tight rope. Imagine you are a race car driver. Pretend you are a subway conductor. “How will you move? Fast or slow? Will you hop or skip?”
Office supplies are a great way for young children to learn about shape and composition, as they are easy to stick and remove and great fun to arrange on a surface.

Materials:
- File folder/dot stickers
- Post-it notes
- Filing Flags and Sticky tabs (available from an office supply store)
- Envelopes
- Notepad/Computer paper
- Markers/Pens
- Small boxes

Prepare materials on a table for your child. For younger children, it might be helpful to take several post-it notes and/or stickers/tabs and set them on the edge of the table.

Talk about the different shapes you see: circles, squares, and rectangles. Discuss how one side feels sticky while the other side is smooth.

Make! Ask your child where they will want to place each item on a piece of paper. For instance, take a dot sticker and say: “Should I put this in the middle of the page, at the top or by the bottom?” Your child will give you an answer. You can then say,
"Ok. Here’s another sticker. Should they be friends and be really close to one another or should they be far, far apart?" Depending on the age of your child, you may want to hand them dot stickers if they’re hard to peel, or they may be able to do this on their own. Children will continue adding stickers; they go fast so make sure to have plenty on hand!

**Play!** These materials can evolve into many different types of play scenarios. Young children may have fun writing “letters” to each other and putting them in envelopes and mailing them. Dot stickers can turn into buttons to create a cash register or computer when placed on a small box. Sticky notes can be layered on top of dot stickers for a fun game of hide-and-seek.
It’s a Cup!

A paper, plastic, or styrofoam cup is a material that can have many possibilities. Children will learn to change and combine common objects to build sculpture that conveys self-expression, identity, and tells a story.

Materials:
• Paper, plastic or styrofoam cups
• Scissors
• Tape
• Optional: wire, stickers, straws, markers

Prepare all materials on a surface so they are presented in a neat and organized way. Ask your child: “What do you see? (a cup) What is it used for? What does it do? I wonder if we could find another use for it.” Be silly: use the cup as a hat, a camera, or earphone . . .

Play a game where the cup turns into a different object through pantomime and take turns guessing what that object could be. Imagine that you are both aliens from outer space and that you have just been blasted down to earth and discovered a new thing. What would you do with it?

Make! Demonstrate how the cup can be ripped or cut into different shapes. Show different materials and think about what new identities they could take on: a straw could become a handle to hold a new pair of goggles, or wire can be used to create a swing. The possibilities are endless.
Making your own paint with your children can be very exciting. You can extract different colors from various fruits and vegetables. Just make sure to keep a close eye on children when the stove is on. This is also a great activity to pre-make ahead of time for young children, as the paints are completely safe (and edible) if they go into little mouths!

Materials:

- Fruits and vegetables: (There are many options to try, but here are three fruits and vegetables with the best results that will give you the primary colors)
  - Beets - magenta
  - Blueberries – blue/purple
  - Onion skins – yellow
- Cooking pans
- Water
- Spoon
- Strainer
- Cups to hold paint
- Paintbrushes
- Paper

Ask your child, “Where do we go to get our paints? How do you think people got their paints a long time ago when there weren’t art stores? They would have had to make their own paints.”
Prepare fruits and vegetables by placing each separate food item in a different bowl. Large items like beets can be cut up in advance. For one cup of fruits or vegetables you’ll add 2 cups water. Your child can help to prepare by crushing certain food items like blueberries between their fingers to help break up the skins, and/or peeling the skin off the onion.

Predict what colors each food will make.

Learn about measurement by measuring the amount of fruit added to the pot and then the amount of water in different measuring cups.

Adults can turn the heat on and carefully supervise children while the stove is on. The mixture will need to cook for 25 minutes. Allow to cool.

Adult will pour liquid through a strainer in a bowl or cup. Each new color should be poured into a different cup.

Make sure that the “paint” is completely cool and experiment by dipping a brush into the liquid. Make a mark on the paper with the brush.

Make! You may want to set up a “kitchen” still-life with your child consisting of items such fruit, vegetables, cups, utensils, etc. Or your child may want to paint from their imagination. Allow time to explore the colors first and make different types of marks. When you begin painting, ask your child, “What do you see? Does the paint remind you of the color of the (fruit/vegetable)? How is it different? I wonder what you will paint with these colors. What will happen if we try to mix the colors on the paper? I wonder if they will look the same or different when the paint dries?”

You can also try painting on different items found in the kitchen, such as coffee filters and paper towels. Experiment by folding and dipping these items in the paint.
Consider how many water bottles we drink out of each year, and the bottle caps that are usually thrown away. Think of the possibilities of what can happen when colorful bottle caps are placed together on a surface, or combined with other kitchen objects such as straws or plastic spoons.

**Materials:**
- Plastic bottle caps from water bottles or caps from baby pouches
- Boxes of all shapes and sizes: try spaghetti, pasta, cereal, snacks
- Glue
- Brush
- Paint (optional)
- Other items such as straws, plastic spoons, papers, etc.
- Paper or cloth to cover the surface of a table

**Prepare** your workspace with paper or a cloth as glue can get very sticky. Prepare the materials by putting them in separate containers such as bowls or small dishes. That way they will stay in place and not roll off of the table. It will also make it easier for your child to see all the choices and to compare/contrast different properties of each.

**Ask** your child, “What do you notice about these bottle caps? What colors are the same? Different? What shape are the bottle caps? Which ones are big? Which ones are small?”

**Play** with the boxes. Ask your child “what if” questions such as, “What would happen if we added caps to the boxes? If we make the boxes stand up tall and on their side?
If we put the caps in different places? What would the caps become? Wheels, chimneys, eyes, etc?” Think of as many ideas as possible!

**Make!** Demonstrate how the bottle caps will not stick to the box if glue is not added. Put the bottle caps on the box and then hold it up so they fall off. Kids crack up at this all the time. Bring out the glue and brush. Once your child has decided which way the box will go, encourage them to cover the box with glue and then place on objects. Incorporate other items from your kitchen such as the plastic straws, spoons or other small materials. After the glue has dried, feel free to add paint or a permanent marker. You can use washable markers on certain types of boxes that do not have a glossy surface.
Shaving cream is a great sensory material that young and older children alike will enjoy squeezing through their fingers and hands.

**Materials:**
- Shaving cream
- Food coloring
- Tray or tupperware container
- Paper towels
- Plastic toys (optional)

**Prepare** materials by setting all of your items on a surface. Children (and adults) may want to wear a smock during this activity, as it can get very messy. You may want to cover the surface you are working on with a plastic tablecloth.

Squeeze the shaving cream into container (a small amount at a time is recommended).

**Ask** your child, “How does it feel? What’s the temperature like? What does it smell like? What happens if we squeeze the shaving cream with both hands? Can you draw in the shaving cream with your finger? What happens when we add more shaving cream on top?”
Experiment by adding small drops of food coloring to the shaving cream. Children can use their hands, a spoon or paintbrush to mix the colors around. Children may want to rub shaving cream up their arms or face—decide what you are comfortable with.

Play! Add plastic animals or toys to the shaving cream and create a “world” for them to explore. Perhaps they are in the Arctic on a mission to find polar bears or having a snowball fight.

Make! Shaving cream is an exploratory material and process and is very hard to save as a final artwork! Take photos in order to capture the process. Experiment with perspective by positioning the camera at different angles to make the objects look larger than life.
Patterns/Printmaking

Printmaking is an exciting way to explore shape, pattern, and texture. It is an activity that can be easily adapted for children of all ages and is fun to try on a variety of surfaces.

Materials:
- Sponges
- Toilet paper tubes
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips
- Paint
- Paper
- Plate or tray to place paint on

Prepare materials by having everything gathered together and laid out on the work surface. Paint should be squeezed onto a plate or a tray. Children may want to wear a smock during this activity, as it can get very messy. You may want to cover the surface you are working on with a plastic tablecloth.

Ask your child, “What is a pattern? Where do we find patterns?” Explore patterns around your home. Look on the walls, floors, ceilings, textiles, and on your own clothing. Ask your child to describe the patterns he/she sees. Say: “It looks like we can find pattern everywhere!”

Make! Dip each item in the paint. See what happens when you use the item to make an imprint on the paper.

Ask your child, “What shape did it make? What happens if we print it again? Do the shapes stay the same or change?”
Experiment by trying new ways to make a mark, or print, using each item, such as rolling the toilet paper tube in the paint and on the paper or moving the items around in different directions. Try printing very fast or printing very slow. Depending on the age of your child, see if they can make a pattern. Point out a pattern and ask them if they can repeat and make the pattern again.

Play! Try printing on different papers or surfaces like cardboard or fabric. The finished prints could then be used as costumes or turned into play objects. A box could be printed on to create a house and paper or cardboard can be used inside for furniture.
In this project, your child will create a mini museum from a shoebox by selecting objects from around the home that are meaningful to them (and they are able to part with in an artwork). This box sculpture will tell a personal story about who they are and be a great conversation starter when discussing your child’s interests, hopes, and dreams.

Materials:

- Shoebox
- Small objects or toys that express your child’s interests and that your child won’t mind having incorporated into the project such as small toys, knick-knacks, photos, old game pieces, etc.
- Paint
- Decorative papers or tissue papers
- Glue
- Paintbrush

Ask your child, “What are some things that make you, you?” (Parents can provide guidance for this by having objects ready in advance or helping the child search throughout the home for materials they might want to use in his/her artwork.)

Make! Your child may first want to paint the inside and/or outside of the box
before starting. Perhaps they may paint it their favorite color or paint objects that are meaningful to him/her. Take a look at all of the different materials your child has selected. Strong glue will be needed to attach certain materials to the box. When the museum is finished, let it dry and then paint.

**Visit!** Take a trip to a museum and think about the objects that are incorporated in the exhibits and what they teach us. What could people learn about you from your mini-museum?
Textiles and jewelry hold such personal meanings. You can use old clothing and textiles of your own, or get swatches from fabric stores for low cost. What better way to save these memories by turning them into a new and very individual artwork?

Materials:

• Various fabrics in a variety of colors and textures
  (you can cut up old clothing into small squares and shapes)

• Buttons, beads, old pieces of jewelry, ribbons, trims

• Paper bag (optional)

• Glue (fabric glue is ideal, but regular glue can work when attaching fabric to paper or cardboard.)

• Scissors

Prepare fabric by cutting it into small shapes. Cutting fabric can be very hard for small hands. Pre-cut shapes are ideal for young children. Glue can be pre-poured. For young children, pour glue in a small dish and use a paintbrush to attach fabric. Older children may be able to squeeze glue directly out of the container.

Ask your child if they have ever heard the word texture. Explore different textures around your home by touching objects such as a rug, a table, a bed, etc. Have your child feel their clothing and describe the different textures. How might cotton differ from denim?
**Play!** Place objects in a paper bag and have your child pull them out of the bag one by one with their eyes closed. Have him/her describe the texture of the fabric. Talk about the stories behind each fabric, “This is Daddy’s old shirt, or these were our curtains before we got new ones.” Bring out the buttons and beads. Describe where these items go on our clothes and bodies.

**Make!** Place all of the fabrics out on the surface. Younger children can dip each piece in the glue and arrange in a collage format. Ask how they might want to arrange the fabrics: will they spread them out or pile them on top of each other? Children can also take their life-size self-portrait from the living room chapter and add these materials onto the paper. A new self-portrait could be made on cardboard by drawing a head at the top of the page and creating clothing using the different fabrics and trims.
Imaginary machines

Explore your home and talk about the different machines you have (for example, a car, a vacuum, a dishwasher, or a television). How do they work? What parts are they made out of (buttons, plugs, numbers, etc.)? How do they help you? What would we do if we didn’t have these machines? In this chapter, children will create their own machine using items found from a garage or storage area.

Materials: (these are a list of suggestions for materials, you may not need to use all of these or may want to add your own!)

- Wood pieces
- Styrofoam packaging blocks
- Paint swatches
- Wire
- Golf tees
- Nuts and bolts
- Wood glue or regular glue
- Hammer and nails (optional)
- Paint and/or markers

Prepare by setting out materials in advance on a surface. Make sure that young children are supervised when using hammers.

Play! Pretend you are the different machines in your home. For instance, how would your body move if you were a washing machine?

Ask your child, “What is something that you need help with? What if you could create a machine that could help you to do something?”
Make! Take a look at all of the different materials. Your child may start with a plan for what type of machine they would like to make (i.e. “a machine that helps me make my bed in the morning”) or the idea may appear once they are engaged in the process. Decide what functions the different materials will take on. For young children, golf tees can be hammered easily into pieces of foam. Older children can work with nails under adult supervision. Strong glue will be needed to attach the materials together. When the machine is finished, let it dry and then add paint or markers, if necessary.

Play! Use your camera or phone to film a “commercial” with your child “selling” their new machine and describing how it will be useful to kids.
The Cardboard Box!

With online delivery services becoming more and more part of our lives, it is likely that a cardboard box will always be available to play with. Children of all ages will enjoy exploring the box in different ways. Here are some examples of ways to use boxes as art materials, and transform boxes from ordinary, everyday objects into something extraordinary and exciting!

Materials:

- Cardboard boxes of all shapes and sizes
- Tape (masking, packing, or duct)
- Markers
- Scissors
- Stickers
- Paint
- Fabric

Prepare your cardboard box. You may want to tape it closed or cut off the flaps of the box. Make sure to keep scissors and other sharp tools out of reach of children.

Ask your child, “I wonder what this box could be?” Think of as many ideas as possible together!

While a cardboard box could be turned into just about anything, here are some ideas to for both younger and older children:

Play! If your younger child has an interest in vehicles, begin by pushing the box across the floor. Ask your child: “How will this vehicle travel? By land, by sea, by air?”
Make a vehicle. Begin changing the shape of the box: the sides of the box might become wings of an airplane, or you might cut circles for wheels. Other boxes can become tunnels and buildings for the vehicles to travel through or by. Decorate the boxes with materials you have on hand. Markers and stickers will make less of a mess, while paint, glue, and fabric will be fun and exciting — just make sure to prep your area beforehand. Be sure to wait for the paint and glue to dry before playing.

Make a robot together. Try combining different sizes of boxes together to build your robot. You can give children a challenge, such as asking them to create a robot that helps kids by making beds, doing homework, etc. Older children may also be interested in adding circuits or moving parts to help their project move!
Shape walk

Children love exploring the neighborhoods and identifying shapes that they know. Bring a digital camera with you and go outside to explore the world around you. When you return, a shape collage project will be waiting for your child.

Materials:
- Digital camera
- Viewfinder (optional for young child)
- Printed photographs (optional)
- Glue stick
- A variety of papers in different colors, sizes, and textures
- Scissors

Prepare for art-making activity by having pre-cut or pre-ripped shapes set out on a table with a glue stick and scissors (depending on your child’s age.)

Prepare for your walk by reviewing shapes. You or your child can draw them on a piece of paper that can be brought along for the shape walk (like a scavenger hunt). Make sure your digital camera is charged and ready to go! If you feel comfortable letting your child manage the camera, he or she can do that. Otherwise you can create a small viewfinder by cutting a rectangle out of a piece of paper or cardboard and that can be his/her camera.

Go for your walk!

Experiment with the frame of the camera and/or viewfinder. Ask your child,
“Look up! Look down, look sideways…what shapes do you see?” You can ask your child to hunt for specific shapes (circles, squares) depending on their age. Return home and look at photos on camera. You can upload them onto a computer or tablet and print them to incorporate in your design.

Ask your child to describe the places they saw on your walk. What shapes were those objects/places made out of?

Make! Tell your child that today they’re going to use shapes to create their own landscape. Photographs from the walk can be cut up and incorporated into the collage. There are also pre-cut shapes (or paper for older children to cut on their own) to add new shapes to create objects they remember from their walk. They can also add shapes from their imagination.
A Neighborhood color walk!

Collect materials to make leaf rubbings, twig paintings, and woven art!

Materials:
- Leaves
- Twigs and sticks
- Paper
- Crayons
- Glue
- Paint
- Yarn
- Cardboard
- Bag to collect materials in during your walk

Prepare by dressing in your color of choice from head to toe, or choosing an item in that color.

Ask your child, “How does dressing in a certain color make you feel?”

Play outside by going for a color walk. Look up, look down, look all around: where do you see colors in your neighborhood?

Ask your child, “What special meanings can colors have?” (For example: red for stop, and green for go; orange or yellow for caution.) “What colors do different
people wear to tell us about their jobs? (For example: firefighters wear red, a mailperson wears blue.)

Make leaf rubbings. Leaves are especially fun to collect in the Fall when the colors are changing. Try to collect different colors and types of leaves. Place leaves under a piece of paper (you can try different types of paper) and rub a crayon on its side across the paper to capture the texture of the leaf. Talk to your child about the lines the leaf’s veins make. Try rubbing from new angles and with different colors.

Make! You can also glue leaves onto a piece of paper and talk to your child about how they change in color and shape over time.

Make twig paintings and weavings. Sticks and twigs are exciting art materials. You can build with them by placing them in clay or play-dough, or gluing them down on a piece of cardboard. Try painting with a long stick by dipping it in paint. Paint a stick and see how the texture of the bark changes. You can help your child cover the stick or twig with yarn by wrapping it around twigs to create a “web.”
Children love discovering what happens when they mix colors together. It is truly magical. You can start small by only adding two colors at a time and then trying new combinations of color. Younger children will work best by mixing paint on a piece of paper with their hands or with a small brush.

Materials:
- Paint
- Cups or pallet to pour paint in
- Pallet
- Brush or brushes of several shapes and sizes
- Large paper
- Water cup
- Paper towels or a sponge

Prepare the paint by pouring it into the cups or palettes.
Ask your child, “What happens when the red and yellow paint mix together? What happens if we add more red, what happens if we add more yellow . . . I wonder what would happen if we added another color?”
As children have more painting experience, they can learn to clean their brushes (you can say “Let’s give our brushes a bath and dry them off with a paper towel or sponge”)

Chapter 7 Neighborhood 47
Color Combinations:
Red + Yellow = Orange
Yellow + Blue = Green
Blue + Red = Purple
Red + White = Pink
Red + Yellow + Blue = Brown
Black + White = Gray

Sometimes children ask whether or not they can make red, blue, yellow, black, and white. Allow them to try different combinations to find out on their own that these colors can’t be made. You can say that primary colors are the first or helper colors that help make new colors for us to enjoy.
Resources

**Stores** where you can gather free or inexpensive materials:

**Frame shops:** ask if they have extra mat board  
**Hardware stores:** discounted “oops!” paint and paint color samples  
**Fabric stores:** Ask for swatches or remnants, which should be free or low-cost  
**Bakeries and wine stores:** packing materials, interesting boxes